

## Response ID ANON-8CC9-KDXK-9

Submitted to **Local Plan Issues and Options**

Submitted on **2020-03-15 16:40:36**

### Your details

**What is your name?**

**Forename:**

Bill

**Surname:**

Butcher

**Are you making an individual response or on behalf of an organisation?**

Organisation

**If individual, please tell us what type:**

**Name of organisation:**

Forum 21

**Please choose one from the drop-down list:**

Community Group

**What is your (personal/organisational) address?**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**What is your email address?**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### 1. Overview and objectives

**Do you agree that these are the right Objectives for the Local Plan?**

Disagree

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

We disagree in part, but were not given this option. Most of the objectives, taken with the deadline for carbon neutrality, are acceptable apart from Item 4. Item 4 emphasises competitiveness and economic growth while we would emphasise diversity and sustainable growth to achieve a low carbon economy within the deadline.

### 2. Carbon neutrality

**Question 1a: Should we aim to require that all new development is 'zero carbon' by as soon as possible (e.g. by 2025) or give slightly more time (e.g. by 2030) for developers to adapt their design approaches, materials and suppliers?**

As soon as possible (e.g. by 2025)

**Question 1b: Should we allocate sites for specific renewable energy development or identify broad areas which we consider suitable?**

A combination of both of the above

**Question 1c: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Many sites have already been given planning permission. Will this be applied retrospectively ?

No mention is made of community and district energy production, which is regarded as the most resilient means of energy production and distribution. Would SWT support these initiatives and include them in the building of council homes ?

### 3. Sustainable locations

**Question 2a: Do you agree with the tiers that identifies Taunton followed by 6 tiers covering the other settlements?**

Yes

**If not, what changes would you make and why? (200 words max):**

**Question 2b: Do you think Watchet and Williton should be seen as associated settlements for the purposes of the Local Plan due to their close proximity and in complementing the services of each other (and therefore be in a higher tier to Bishops Lydeard and Wiveliscombe)?**

No - Watchet and Williton should be seen as separate settlements

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

The two settlements have distinct characteristics and the residents would be unlikely to agree to this.

**Question 2c: Do you think we should carry on with the way housing is currently distributed across our area (see pie chart) or should we be doing something different, such as one of the three options suggested below?**

Leave housing distribution the same

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

The housing needs may change over the period of the plan. More social rent homes are needed in minor rural areas where market homes are likely to become second homes or holiday lets.

**What else do you think about housing distribution in our area?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Re (v) Once Hinkley C is built the amount of jobs available will be minimal as workers will transfer from Hinkley B ( due to close in 2023). The additional housing provided for the departed construction workers should be adequate at that time.

In general these issues (2c) would be resolved if public transport is greatly improved.

**Question 2d: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

These issues should be addressed on a case by case basis , which they are already are to some extent through planning law.

The over-provision of planned housing in Watchet and Williton without additional infrastructure is an example of where this has failed.

### 4. New and affordable homes

**Question 3a: Should our housing requirement figure match the Government's minimum figure of 702 dwellings per year or should we have a higher figure?**

The housing requirement should be higher than 702 dwellings per year and determined by economic growth strategies, infrastructure improvements and unmet need from neighbouring planning authorities

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

Do these numbers include the number of homes lost to second home buyers and holiday lets which are an acknowledged major problem in the West Somerset area.

**Question 3b: How should we proactively plan for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches?**

Allocate sites specifically for pitches.

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

This group should be specifically consulted.

**Question 3c: Should we require that all new housing developments include a percentage of new homes that are designed to be accessible, adaptable and wheelchair accessible?**

Require a proportion of dwellings to meet the category standard as set out in Building Regulations Part M.

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

Part M building regulations only apply to "visitability" ie a disabled person visiting a home not living in it.

A general approach of providing lifetime homes which can be adapted over time is the most appropriate and enables the residents to continue to live in their homes and reduce their need for social care.

**Question 3d: How should we provide for custom self-build plots? Should we:**

Include a positive encouragement policy, including for community-led projects, and leave the housing market to deliver plots as and when demand arises; and/or, Identify and allocate specific sites for self-build plots in locations related to where people want to live according to our self-build register; and/or, Include a requirement for all housing development sites over a threshold to include a proportion of plots as self-build plots; and/or, Allow self-build plots on Rural Exception sites provided that they are secured as affordable housing for ever

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

**Question 3e: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

These approaches are only acceptable if affordable homes are not available to be sold on the open market in the future. Some tenures allow this, which in turn reduces the number of affordable homes available in the district.

Providing mainly secure social rented homes is the most effective way of ensuring long term affordability and building resilient communities.

## 5. A prosperous economy

**Question 4a: Should we ensure the growth of our local economy through an increase in the proportion of higher value jobs (with limited increase of jobs overall) or through a significant increase in the number of jobs?**

Align with the Heart of the South West growth ambitions (deliver a shift towards a significant increase in overall job numbers including higher value jobs)

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

**Question 4b: Should we keep all of our existing employment sites and allocations in employment use or should we allow the loss of some to other uses? How should we decide which ones to lose?**

Develop flexible policy allowing for the loss of any existing/ proposed employment site subject to specific criteria

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

**Question 4c: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Large globally based developments expose the local economy to job losses during economic downturns. Smaller locally based companies are more resilient and likely to be environment friendly.

Once Hinkley C is built the amount of jobs available will be minimal as workers will transfer from Hinkley B ( due to close in 2023).

## 6. Infrastructure

**Question 5a: On what infrastructure should we prioritise developer contributions? (Please rank in order of priority)**

**IO - 5a - ranking - Affordable housing:**

2

**IO - 5a - ranking - Designing for the Climate Change Emergency:**

1

**IO - 5a - ranking - Accessible, Adaptable and Wheelchair Accessible homes:**

3

**IO - 5a - ranking - Strategic Infrastructure (schools, transport, community facilities):**

4

**Question 5b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

It has been considered that CIL would not be usable in West Somerset and Section 106 is more useful in this part of the district

SUDS should be made mandatory.

## 7. Connecting people

**Question 6a: How can we encourage people not to use their car when travelling into our towns for shopping and work? How can we provide more opportunities for using public transport in rural areas?**

**Please provide comments (200 words max):**

Local authorities and government should subsidise or run bus services as not for profit essential services. They could also support community groups, such as Atwest, who provide specialist transport to meet the needs of residents and contribute to their well being. This would also reduce costs for Highways which may become significant if a Unitary authority is introduced.

**Question 6b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

We agree with these policy approaches but think that a much less car centric and imaginative approach is needed for road design.

## **8. The natural and historic environment**

**Question 7a: Are there any specific measures that you would like to see new developments deliver to improve biodiversity locally?**

**Please provide comments (200 words max):**

Low carbon and flood management farming methods must be encouraged.

Biodiversity must be considered when designing development and there is an abundant range of information and advice available on this.

There should be a plan in place to provide for long term displacement of residents and businesses when sea levels rise.

Hinkley A, B and C are all at risk from rising sea levels including the working reactors and high level waste storage.

**Question 7b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

We agree with all these policy points, but have concerns about 7b/12 as there is no indication as to how ownership and management of tree planting sites is to be achieved.

## **9. Thriving coastal and rural communities**

**Question 8a: How should we manage development in rural areas? Should we:**

Have a policy which is a hybrid of (i) and (ii) where there are settlement boundaries only in areas of greater development pressure i.e. parts of the District that are more accessible - closer to the M5, Taunton and Wellington areas.

**Question 8b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

We agree with these policy approaches. and Forum 21 has promoted farm transformation for many years.

With regard to 8b/8, one issue currently relevant is that EDF are requesting permission to forgo the protection of fish stocks and breeding grounds of the Severn Rivers catchment area, despite an acoustic fish deterrent being promised by the company at the time of granting of permission. This would stop fish being drawn into the cooling water intake tubes.

## **10. Wellbeing of our residents**

**Question 9a: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Many roads in West Somerset are too dangerous for use by pedestrians and cyclists. Provision of multi-use tracks on the field side of hedgerows would overcome this and long traffic jams.

## **11. Policies for our places: Taunton**

**Question 10a: How do you think we could introduce more housing into Taunton Town centre?**

Encouraging car-free developments (which could include allocating specific sites for car-free developments).

**Please provide reasons for your answers (200 words max):**

As our organisation does not cover Taunton we will not comment

**Question 10b: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

As our organisation does not cover Taunton we will not comment

## **12. Policies for our places: Wellington**

**Question 11a: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

As our organisation does not cover Wellington we will not comment

## **13. Policies for our places: the Coastal Strip**

**Question 12a: Do you have any comments on these policy approaches?**

**Please provide comments (250 words max):**

Minehead is a diverse and fragmented community. Support should be given to community initiatives such as Mens Sheds. as well as facilities for all age groups.

Support is needed to build a community which has the oldest population in the country and, therefore, a very unbalanced demographic.

12a/2 Better public transport and cycle friendly streets and roads would reduce the need for car parking.